



ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

April 2004

1. WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the official examination of potential impacts of proposed actions in a study area on the natural and built environment. The study must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that mandates extensive evaluation of environmental effects and public input regarding transportation projects.

2. WHY AN EIS?

To address projected local and regional population growth and transportation demand in western Salt Lake County and western Utah County north of Utah Lake, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and its partners have initiated the Mountain View Corridor (MVC) EIS.

3. WHERE IS THE STUDY AREA?

The MVC EIS area is approximately 35 miles long and incorporates the following regions:

North-South parameters: I-80 in Salt Lake County to the Pleasant Grove Interchange in Utah County to the south (approximately 6400 North).

East-West parameters: Bangerter Highway (east) to U-111 (approximately 6900 West) in Salt Lake County; approximately 11800 West in Saratoga Springs to I-15 for the Utah County portion.

4. WHO ARE THE PROJECT PARTNERS?

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in cooperation with the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), Utah Transit Authority (UTA), Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG), and the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC), are preparing this EIS. Envision Utah will facilitate the "Growth Choices" process related to this project. Growth Choices invites stakeholders from the communities within the corridor to craft their preferred scenario of future growth and transportation improvements. These scenarios will be considered when transportation alternatives are developed.

5. HOW DO THE OLD STUDIES TIE TO THIS ONE?

WFRC and MAG, the local Metropolitan Planning Organizations, conducted previous transportation studies of this area. These studies were planning-level projects and identified the need for an improved transportation system in the study area. The more in-depth EIS is the next step in the process. While past studies have identified potential corridors, this study will consider the feasibility of all transportation options.

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6. ARE YOU GOING TO CARRY FORWARD ANY OF THE PREVIOUS STUDIES' PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES?

UDOT and the other project partners are committed to looking at all transportation alternatives for the study area, including no action, transit, roadways, trails, and other multi-modal options. While there are no preconceived notions attached to the project, we have gleaned important information from past studies that will make the EIS process even more effective.

7. WHY WAS THE NAME CHANGED?

While the Western Transportation Corridor and North Valley Connector studies separately examined potential corridors in western Salt Lake and northwest Utah counties, respectively, this is the first combined study for the entire geographic region. It is also the first EIS study for this area. The name was chosen to represent the entire geographic landscape and to give this unique project a distinct identity.

8. WILL YOU STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS?

We value the environment and this project team includes some of the best environmental minds to ensure that we consider every natural asset and potential impact.

9. HOW MUCH WILL THE EIS COST?

We estimate that the EIS will cost approximately \$6 million over three years. The funding is a combination of federal and state dollars. There is nothing funded for construction because we don't yet know the final solution.

10. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PROCESS?

When we refer to the EIS "process," we are talking about the steps we will take to thoroughly study impacts to the natural and built environment. This also includes the tools we will implement to identify and evaluate transportation options and to facilitate public participation and feedback.

11. WHY IS ENVISION UTAH INVOLVED?

Envision Utah has worked with many communities in Utah to examine Growth Choices and land use plans. They will use this expertise to help cities build comprehensive growth plans. The cities will then be equipped to suggest transportation alternatives for the EIS that fit these plans.

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12. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EIS PROCESS AND THE ENVISION UTAH PROCESS? HOW ARE THE TWO PROCESSES INTERCONNECTED?

As part of the EIS, UDOT will take a snapshot of the future land use plans of all communities in the study area, and will use those to help select the transportation alternatives for the EIS. The Growth Choices process facilitated by Envision Utah will allow communities along the study area to review their land use plans relative to the various transportation and growth scenarios that may be implemented in the future. The communities can then decide whether to make any changes to their master plans before UDOT takes their land-use snapshot in developing transportation alternatives.

13. WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THIS PROJECT?

Building upon the success of past studies, the MVC project incorporates a fine-tuned level of coordination between the Growth Choices and EIS processes, allowing cities to closely examine and potentially update their land use plans before transportation alternatives are selected as part of the EIS.

14. WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

Due to the large geographic area incorporated in this study and because transportation issues impact virtually everyone, there are dozens of stakeholder groups representing very diverse publics—from environmental advocates to property owners and from elected officials to school children.

15. WHO DECIDES WHAT HAPPENS HERE?

Public input is critical to the EIS process. Local citizens are encouraged to share opinions and suggestions that will help determine the transportation alternatives that are considered in the EIS. Based on this input and upon impacts to the natural and built environment, the partnering organizations will determine the best transportation solution.

16. HOW IS THIS PROJECT RELATED TO THE LEGACY PARKWAY?

Back in 1996, Governor Leavitt stated his vision for a 100+ mile “Legacy Highway” from Brigham City to Nephi. This was based on the need to meet long-term projected transportation growth in the western part of Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah counties. The initial outcome of this “vision” was the Legacy Parkway project in Davis County. While the MVC project was a part of the originally conceived “Legacy Highway”, it is a distinctly different and separate project, and does not connect directly to the Legacy Parkway project. The MVC EIS has its own set of unique characteristics and challenges. The partner organizations will use past experience from Legacy and other projects to identify feasible solutions while still considering innovative answers to the questions unique to this project.

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17. WHAT DO TRANSPORTATION AND ADVOCACY GROUPS THINK ABOUT ALL OF THIS?

While we cannot speak for these groups, UDOT and Envision Utah have made a concentrated effort to involve them as members of the Growth Choices stakeholder committee. Their input will be an important consideration in identifying transportation alternatives, along with feedback from all stakeholder groups.

18. HOW WILL LOCAL OFFICIALS/MUNICIPALITIES BE INVOLVED?

Local officials from all of the impacted communities are part of the Growth Choices stakeholder committee. As members of the committee, they have a significant voice. These officials will also play a critical role in reaching out to community members and implementing the tools to get feedback from their constituents.

19. WHAT PERFORMANCE MEASURES WILL BE USED TO EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES?

As transportation needs in the area are defined, the EIS team will have a better idea of the necessary performance measures that should be used to evaluate alternatives. In general terms, however, we will consider the impacts of each alternative, including potential relocations and cost, as well as the capacity of each alternative to meet future travel demand. Public and agency comments in the early stages of the EIS will contribute to the team's understanding of specific measures to be included in alternatives evaluation.

20. IS CONSTRUCTION FUNDED?

We will examine all transportation options as part of this project—from no-action to roadways to transit to trails. Because the final solution is not yet determined and because that solution could be a no-action option, construction funding is not yet identified.

21. SHOULD ONE PORTION OF THE CORRIDOR BE PRIORITIZED?

Significant population growth in the study area is what has prompted this EIS study. With that growth comes a sense of urgency for transportation solutions in each community. Once the EIS process is complete, transportation officials will determine the schedule based on need and funding.



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22. WHAT IS THE EIS SCHEDULE?

Following is the current EIS schedule:

January 2003 – Summer 2003

Scoping – Issue Identification / Purpose and Need

February 2003 – Spring 2004

Growth Choices Process

Summer 2003 – Spring 2004

Definition of Alternatives

Autumn 2003 – Autumn 2004

Impacts of Alternatives

Summer 2004 – Winter 2005

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Summer 2005 – Winter 2006

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Spring 2006

Record of Decision

23. WHERE IS THE NEW ROAD GOING TO BE LOCATED AND WHEN WILL IT BE BUILT?

This EIS will examine all transportation alternatives—from no-action to new roadways to a transit system to trails. Until the EIS is completed, we will not know whether a new roadway will be a part of the solution. Before location and construction schedules can be set, the EIS process will have to be completed.

24. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE CORRIDOR THAT HAS BEEN PRESERVED?

Based on the EIS, the preserved corridor may or may not be a part of the final transportation solution. If the final solution does not include this corridor then UDOT could sell the property.

25. HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED IN THE STUDY PROCESS?

Multiple communication tools will be used to facilitate public input on this project, including community meetings, paper and electronic surveys, and a toll-free “comment” phone number – 1.800.596.2556. To keep the public informed about the process, project partners will offer a project website – www.udot.utah.gov/mountainview, community presentations, and city newsletter articles, among other communication tools.

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26. HOW WILL THIS PROJECT AFFECT PROPERTY VALUES?

At this point in the process it is impossible to predict exactly what the final recommended solution will be, which makes it difficult to answer specific questions about how property values may be impacted. However, general information about property owner's rights and UDOT's acquisition, appraisal, and relocation process can be accessed on the UDOT website (www.udot.utah.gov) under the "Public" tab, "Project, Studies, and Future Plans" on the first drop-down menu, and "Property Rights and Acquisitions" on the second drop-down menu.

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